

Topic:

## Choosing a Canoe

QC-1703

Resource:

[Canoe Terminology](#)

**Basics:** OK, we have decided we want to buy a canoe, now, now how do we decide on which one is best for us? How many people will be in the canoe: one, two, three? The bigger the canoe, the harder it is for one person to paddle. Weight may be an issue for: car topping, carrying to the put-in, portaging on long trips. Room for gear may be of concern: in case of camping or fishing, or use as a work boat.

**Question:** *What factors affect weight in a canoe?*

**Answer:** The basic factor affecting weight is composition. Aluminum and plastic boats are durable but heavy. Fiberglass and Kevlar boats are lighter but require more care to avoid impact damage. A gunnel adds weight, but also adds stiffness and strength to the hull. Seats, thwarts and carry handles provide either structure or utility, but also add weight to a canoe.

**Question:** *What factors affect paddleability of a canoe?*

**Answer:** Freeboard, the distance from water to the gunnel will determine how susceptible the canoe is to wind affects. Length and width will determine how fast the canoe can go, but also affect stability. Having a pronounced keel will help keep the canoe on course, but may also make it harder to turn. Having a proper paddling station just rear of midships makes a huge difference to the solo paddler.

**Advanced Concepts:** You may want to get more information on the following:

- What are painters and why should every canoe have them?
- How can I load the canoe to counter wind effects?
- Is sitting or kneeling the best way to paddle a given canoe?
- What is Roylex and why is it a material to consider for a canoe?

*For more information contact*

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